



U.S. Department of Justice

United States Attorney

Eastern District of Pennsylvania

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July 13, 2010

**POLICE OFFICERS AND ALLEGED DRUG DEALERS**  
**CHARGED IN DRUG CASE**

PHILADELPHIA - An indictment<sup>1</sup> was unsealed today against Robert Snyder, Mark Williams, and James Venziale, all Philadelphia Police Officers assigned to the 25<sup>th</sup> and 39<sup>th</sup> Districts, as well as Zachary Young, Angel Ortiz, Christal Snyder, and Miguel Santiago, charging them in a drug conspiracy case involving heroin and related offenses, announced United States Attorney Zane David Memeger. According to the indictment, the defendants planned and executed a scheme to steal heroin from defendant Santiago and then distribute that heroin to another person whom the defendants believed to be a drug dealer and money launderer, but who was, in reality, an undercover Special Agent from the Drug Enforcement Administration. Joining in today's announcement were DEA Special Agent-in-Charge John Bryfonski, FBI Special Agent-in-Charge Janice K. Fedarczyk, Philadelphia Mayor Michael Nutter, and Philadelphia Police Commissioner Charles Ramsey.

According to the indictment, defendants Young and Ortiz were involved in the distribution of heroin, which they obtained on a periodic basis from defendant Santiago and other sources. In mid-April, defendants Young and Ortiz began to develop a scheme to steal 300 grams of heroin from their supplier, Miguel Santiago. The indictment further alleges that Philadelphia Police Officers Robert Snyder, Mark Williams, and James Venziale abused their authority as police officers and agreed to assist defendants Young and Ortiz in this scheme to steal heroin from Santiago. The indictment alleges that defendants Young and Ortiz discussed with the Snyders, Williams, and Venziale various ways that they could use their positions as police officers to steal the heroin from Santiago. The indictment details how defendants Robert Snyder, Williams, Young, and Ortiz, implemented the plan after this discussion. On May 14, 2010, immediately after Santiago's drug courier delivered 300 grams of heroin to Ortiz, Officers Williams and Venziale – who were on duty and in uniform – stopped defendant Ortiz's vehicle while he was in possession of the 300 grams of heroin, which had just been supplied to him by Santiago's courier. With Santiago's courier watching nearby, Officers Williams and Venziale made it appear as if they were seizing the heroin and arresting defendant Ortiz by handcuffing him outside the vehicle Ortiz had occupied. According to the indictment, defendant Christal Snyder, Robert Snyder's wife, facilitated the

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<sup>1</sup>An Indictment or Information is an accusation. A defendant is presumed innocent unless and until proven guilty.

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conspiracy by passing information, frequently via telephone or via text message, between defendants Ortiz and defendants Robert Snyder, Mark Williams and James Venziale.

The indictment alleges that, as a result of the co-conspirators obtaining the 300 grams of heroin without payment to Santiago, Ortiz paid defendants Williams and Venziale approximately \$6,000, and paid defendant Christal Snyder an additional amount of currency.

In addition to the conspiracy, the indictment charges defendants Young, Ortiz, and Mark Williams with distributing and aiding and abetting the distribution of heroin, and with using a telephone in furtherance of a drug conspiracy. Defendants Robert and Christal Snyder are charged with conspiracy and with using a telephone in furtherance of a drug conspiracy. Defendant James Venziale is charged with conspiracy and with distributing and aiding and abetting the distribution of heroin. Defendant Santiago is charged with distributing and aiding and abetting the distribution of heroin. He is the only defendant not charged in the conspiracy count.

INFORMATION REGARDING THE DEFENDANTS

NAME	ADDRESS	AGE OR YEAR OF BIRTH
Zachary Young	Philadelphia, PA	1959
Angel Ortiz	Philadelphia, PA	1985
Miguel Santiago	Philadelphia, PA	1971
Robert Snyder	Philadelphia, PA	1980
Christal Snyder	Philadelphia, PA	1983
Mark Williams	Philadelphia, PA	1983
James Venziale	Philadelphia, PA	1978

If convicted the defendants face the following maximum possible sentences:

Young: maximum sentence of 104 years in prison with a mandatory minimum term of five years.;  
Ortiz: maximum sentence of 212 years in prison, with a mandatory minimum term of five years.;  
Santiago: maximum sentence of 120 years in prison, with a mandatory minimum term of five years imprisonment.;

Robert Snyder: maximum sentence of 44 years in prison, with a mandatory minimum term of five years.;

Christal Snyder: maximum sentence of 60 years in prison, with a mandatory minimum term of five years.;

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Mark Williams: maximum sentence of 84 years in prison, with a mandatory minimum term of five years.;  
James Venziale: maximum of 80 years in prison, with a mandatory minimum term of five years.

The case was investigated by The Drug Enforcement Administration and the Federal Bureau of Investigation, with the cooperation and assistance of the Philadelphia Police Department. The case is being prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorneys Kathy A. Stark and Maureen McCartney.

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